

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 20174

NODIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR EG IS US
SUBJECT: REPORTED SADAT MEETINGS WITH AMERICAN CORRESPON-
- DENTS

REF: (A) STATE 221466, (B) 20098

1. WHEN I ASKED HASSAN KAMEL ABOUT STORY WE HAD HEARD THAT CRONKITE, WALTERS AND CHANCELLOR WOULD ACCOMPANY SADAT FROM PARIS TO WASHINGTON, WHICH WE HAD HEARD FROM GOOD SOURCE, HE RESPONDED THAT THERE WAS NO TRUTH WHATSOEVER TO THIS REPORT. SADAT HAD AGREED TO HAVE BILL SCHMIDT OF NEWSWEEK AND WILTON WYNN OF TIME FLY ON HIS PLANE, BUT THIS WAS SIMPLY A COURTESY AND DID NOT INVOLVE INTERVIEWS. KAMEL FLATLY DENIED THAT ANY OTHER AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS OR COMMENTATORS WOULD ACCOMPANY HIM.

2. AFTER HASSAN KAMEL HAD DENIED THE INFORMATION WE HAD RECEIVED, I WENT ON TO SAY THAT I WAS SURE THE EGYPTIANS AGREED THAT SUCH CONTACT WITH THE PRESS WOULD BE AGAINST OUR MUTUAL DESIRES FOR A LOW PROFILE AND CALM ATMOSPHERE BEFORE CAMP DAVID. KAMEL RESPONDED "OF COURSE, OF COURSE, WE ALL AGREE ENTIRELY".

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3. FON MIN KAMEL'S CHEF DE CABINET AHMED MAHER IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION TOLD POLCOUNS THAT HE HAD HEARD OF POSSIBILITY THAT CRONKITE, WALTERS AND CHANCELLOR MIGHT ACCOMPANY THE PRESIDENT, BUT THAT THIS IDEA HAD BEEN DROPPED. ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT KNOW DETAILS OF HOW THIS SUGGESTION AROSE, MAHER WAS CONFIDENT THAT THERE

IS NO LONGER ANY CHANCE OF ITS OCCURRING.

4. COMMENT: REGARDLESS OF HOW THIS PROPOSAL AROSE AND AT WHOSE INITIATIVE, IT IS NO LONGER A POSSIBILITY. WHILE HASSAN KAMEL HAD EVIDENTLY NOT HEARD OF THIS IDEA, HE WAS CERTAIN THAT THESE COMMENTATORS WOULD NOT BE ON SADAT'S PLANE, AND KAMEL IS THE ONE IN CHARGE OF WHO GETS ON THE FLIGHT. IN ADDITION, I THINK SADAT WOULD AGREE WITH THE UNDESIRABILITY OF HIS GIVING INTERVIEWS TO PROMINENT AMERICAN TV COMMENTATORS JUST BEFORE CAMP DAVID. HE HAS CAREFULLY AVOIDED INTERVIEWS WITH AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS IN CAIRO AND I BELIEVE HE INTENDS TO LIVE UP TO HIS EARLIER COMMITMENT NOT TO MAKE STATEMENTS THAT COULD HARM THE PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESSFUL DISCUSSIONS AT CAMP DAVID. MY OWN GUESS IS THAT OUR EAGER AMERICAN COMMENTATORS MAY HAVE MADE A NICE TRY, BUT DID NOT SUCCEED. MATTHEWS

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